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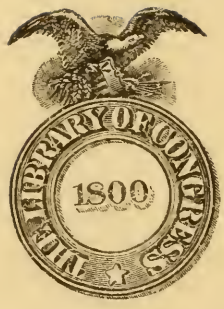
THE WOOING OF BOREAS

AND OTHER POEMS

By L. W. H.



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BY

L. W. H.

New York
Bonnell, Silver & Bowers
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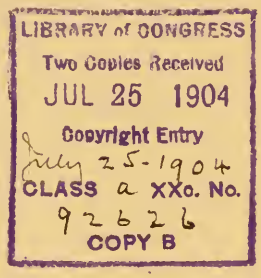

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Dedicated to
My Dear Father and Mother

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THE MIRAGE.

The sinking sunbeams glisten on the sands,
  The desert stretches wide in golden light,
And far away the distant caravans
  Wind ever on and disappear from sight,
Where flocks of fleecy clouds are skimming past
  To sink and settle in the west at last.

But lo! the heavens seem to burst in flame;
  Wildly the hordes of Islam hasten on
Shouting aloud their warlike prophet's name;
  They sweep along beneath the setting sun;
They pass with trampling steeds, and clang of arms,
  And earth re-echoes with their wild alarms.

And now the red has mellowed into gold,
  Vast cities seem to stretch from sea to sea,
In pomp and glory and in wealth untold
  A scene of oriental luxury.
The dome-crowned mosques and palaces arise
  'Mid palms and gardens green against the skies.

Slowly the gold dissolves, the cities fall,
The gilded scene now softly fades away;
Here stands a column or a shattered wall,
While all the rest has vanished with the day;
At last these very remnants disappear,
And the lone desert spreads out dark and drear.

Thus, oh, Arabia! was thy sudden rise,
Thy wealth, thy grandeur and thy swift decline;
And thou has left few relics for our eyes;
Yet one attests thy glory to mankind,
The great Alhambra stands at this late hour
The last and noblest relic of thy power.

L. W. H.—1899.

CHANGE.

I saw a warrior at dawn of day
Standing with folded arms upon the shore;
I turned and watched him as I went my way;
This man of strife and war.

In admiration bound, I stood to gaze
Upon his massive form and noble mein;
Upon the scars that marred his swarthy face
So noble and serene.

"Oh man of war! oh tower of strength!" I mused,
"Thy mighty limbs the storms of life defy.
Hardened to hardships, and to war well used,
Could'st thou decay or die?"

* * * * * *

As sunset came, there wandered o'er the sands
An old man, withered up and bent with years,
Who leaned upon the cane within his hands,
Oppressed by childish fears.

And in this tottering, aged man I saw
The warrior who in strength and grandeur stood,
It could not be so many years before,
Beside this very wood.

And thus must strength and beauty fade away,
All that's lovely, all that's grand and high,
Thus everything must wither and decay,
Rise, shine, then fade and die.

L. W. H.—1898.

FANATICS.

Accursed they stand a lonely band
From age to age;
Long have they borne the brunt of
Comtempt and rage.

They saw life through a crooked view;
This was the crime
For which they bled, nor flinched, nor fled
In every clime.

They dared to fight for what was right
As they believed,
And shut their ears to all the jeers
Which they received.

Their bodies wet with blood and sweat,
  They did not swerve,
And Heaven knows they bore their blows
  With grit and nerve.

They sowed the seeds of mighty deeds
  Both good and bad,
And those that saw looked on in awe
  And called them mad.

Too great a flood of such fierce blood
  Might wreck mankind,
Yet they inspire the world with fire,
  Zeal unconfined.

L. W. H.—1900.

THE NORTH POLE.

All dark and cold, mysterious, sublime,
  She sits upon the summit of the earth,
Where she will be until the end of time
  And has been since its birth.

A corselet of smooth ice, unbroken bright
  Covers her breast; and stretching everywhere
Reflects and radiates in golden light,
  Her locks of waving hair.

The dark folds of her purple mantle float,
  Set with a million diamonds, wide and far
And one bright diamond clasps it on her throat,
  The gleaming polar star.

And siren-like she entices men to death,
  Brave mariners who fear not sea or sky,
She breathes upon them with her icy breath
  Until they freeze and die.

Destruction waits the men who seek to know
  Her secrets, or to look upon her face;
Except the dull, unthinking Esquimo,
  Her people and her race.

L. W. H.—1900.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

The waves roared loud and the waves dashed high
And madly leapt to the frowning sky;
The ship rolled round in the trough of the sea,
And the crew were as drunk as a crew could be.
"Steer to the north," the captain said,
"To the polar star, there swinging ahead."
The pilot looked, but he saw no star,
Save one gleaming bright in the mist afar;
So he bore hard-a-port, the pilot he,
And the rest bore port till they couldn't see;
And the north star brighter and brighter grew
Till it seemed that the sun had hove in view.
"Now I may be mad, and it may be dreams,"

Said the pilot at last, "but shiver my beams
If I steer by that blooming star any more—
No, not if the breakers heave us ashore."
Then the captain swore, and he grasped the wheel,
And the ship rocked as if she had no keel,
And the rays of the north star, gleaming bright,
Were cutting the fog to the left and right.
Then all at once, from the mist ahead,
Came the booming of breakers drear and dread,
And the spray dashed high on the light-house wall,
Standing cold and grey—and that is all.

L. W.. H.—1900.

A MIDNIGHT REVERIE.

Upon the dark cold sea to-night
  The silvery moonbeams play;
They turn the wave crests into light,
  A path as bright as day.

To-night while wandering on the shore
  I chose a sheltered seat,
Amidst the booming breakers' roar,
  Where earth and ocean meet.

A ship half shadowed as a dream
  Glides silent toward the light,
Hovers an instant in the gleam
  Then out into the night.

So frailer ships through storm and cold
  Upon a wider main,
Have sailed awhile the path of gold,
  Then sought the gloom again.

L. W. H.—1900.

THE SYLVAN DANCE.

Dark shadows fall upon the woods,
  The silver moon comes forth,
The bright stars rival in their light
  The streamers of the north.

Upon a grassy forest glade
  The moon serene shines down,
And casts a mystic golden light
  Upon it and around.

And lo, the jovial satyrs dance
  Within the golden light,
And join the graceful forest nymphs,
  Arrayed in robes of white.

The scene now glows and sparkles bright,
  Soft music swells the air,
And sweetly, gayly glide around
  The jovial and the fair.

They whirl around, the joyous throng;
The nymphs and satyrs sing;
And gay and mystic are the rites
Within the magic ring.

Now slower, slower grows the dance,
The light begins to wane,
The music softly fades, then swells
And dies away again.

Oh, softly, softly strike the lute,
The dance is growing slow,
And sadly dim the shadows flit
And slowly fades the glow.

The sylvan bells have died away,
The moonlit glade is cleared
And all the gentle forest nymphs
Have fled and disappeared.

How quickly all bright visions come
And quickly fade away;
But leave their charm upon the heart
Forever and for aye!

L. W. H.—1898.

INVOCATION.

Once more the sunrise summons us to toil,
We leave our rest;
Once more we tread the old familiar soil
With memories blest.
Victorious triumph, or ruin awaits
With mein forlorn.
Yet may we never falter, at the gates,
But bold press on,
Lord God of might, be thou our light,
While yet we live.

As through the cycle of revolving years
We've safely passed,
Lord save us from our many doubts and fears
Until the last.
By Thy almighty power may we temptation brave
Then, victory won,
Oh, grant that we may sink into our graves,
Our duty done.
Lord God of might, be Thou our light,
While yet we live.

L. W. H.—1899.

THE TOAST.

I raised the goblet in the air
With its weight of solid gold.
What is the wine that sparkles there
Is it clear champagne, or Madeira fair?
Or Burgundy, good and old?

"A toast, my friend I drink to you!"
And I lifted the goblet up.
But the wine had lost its amber hue—
'Twas merely a glitt'ring drop of dew,
And the glass was a buttercup.

L. W. H.—1900.

THE MINSTREL'S LAST LAY.

Striking his harp with wearied palms,
The Bard poured forth his plaintive lay,
Till quivering with the echoing chords,
His soul in music seemed to say:—

"Weary! oh how weary is the never ending strife,
Cruel! oh how cruel is the ceaseless toil of life,
Empty! oh how empty is the flask of Hope we'd drain,
Hollow! oh how hollow are the joys, that turn to pain.

"Would that in some pleasant land of dreams,
Blessed with no knowledge of this world of woe,
Bathed in the depths of Lethe's limpid streams,
I might forget the sorrows that I know.

"By cool melodious waters rippling over golden sands,
Midst pleasant valleys clothed in living green,
I might sink down in soothing sleep to rest my wear-
ried soul,
And all things fade as though they ne'er had been."

The music ceased; the Bard was still, and mute;
But on his face a look of rapture grew,
For ere the harp had ceased its magic song,
That which he long had sighed for, had come true.

L. W. H.—1900.

MEMORY.

Ah, memory, come and take me in thy boat,
Thy gilded shell upon the waves of time;
And silently and calmly let us float
Back to the past sublime,
The shadowy past of poetry and rhyme;
Come memory!

And verily thou art a magic queen,
Ruling a kingdom vast and undefined;
And thou canst show me faces I have seen,
And open eyes now blind,
And let me live the life that's left behind;
Strange memory!

For thou hast potent charms that seem to throw
A glamour o'er the past before my sight,
That softens, sweetens even grief and woe,
And makes all pleasures bright,
Until they glow with soft, delicious light;
Sweet memory!

Thus drifting ever on from spot to spot,
Bring up thy fading visions to my eyes,
And scenes but half remembered, half forgot;
Let shadowy figures rise
That dream-like fade and leave me but their sighs;
Vague memory!

Why wilt thou ever whisper as we fly
That all this is unreal and truth is stern?
Why wilt thou ever mourn for times gone by,
Times which cannot return?
And must I ever long and ever yearn,
Sad memory?

Ay, truth is stern, and all must fade away;
Thy dreams and mystic visions must depart;
So waft me back into the light of day.
I know not whence thou art,
But this I know, that thou wilt tear my heart,
Oh memory!

L. W. H.—1900.

THE STORM BIRDS.

When the storm clouds hang o'er the raging sea,
And the black waves dash up angrily,
Tossing their white waves to and fro,
To sink again in the depths below;
When the thunder rolls and the winds rush by
With a dismal moan, then the sea gulls fly
Like a fleet of ships on the raging ocean
Rising and falling with ceaseless motion;
They tack to right and to left, then sail
With their white wings fluttering in the gale;
For they love the storm and the ocean's roar
With the ardor of warriors going to war,

And their screams amid the lightning's flash
And the howling wind and the thunder crash
Ring like the piercing war-cry, clear
'Mid the din of the battle, far and near.
Thus fly the sea gulls, and oft I think,
As I watch them over the ocean's brink,
That these wild vultures of storm and strife
Are the souls of the vikings gone from life;
Homeless and restless, and wild and free,
They must ever roam o'er the boundless sea.

L. W. H.—1900.

THE WOOING OF BOREAS.

Rosy-fingered Aurora appears
  High over Aetolia's hills;
Dewy morning discloses a maiden
  Thinking tearfully over her ills.

On her beautiful cheek the soft West-wind,
  Sweet Zephyr, brushes from her her tear,
And as he sweeps over her shoulder
  He speaks words of love in her ear.

"Cool West-wind, thy breezes console me;
  Waft the sorrow away from my heart.
Fan my cheeck, O Favanius! I love thee;
  From thee I wish never to part."

But Zephyr's amours to the maiden—
  Broken off by a terrible noise
And the keen piercing blast of the North-wind,
  And the sound of a moaning, hoarse voice.

"O maiden!" the voice sounded gruffly,
  "O maiden! oh come and be mine."
T'was wild Boreas who frightened the damsel
  As she sprung from her pleasant recline.

"I love thee, maiden, I love thee,
  No harm from me thou'lt receive;
Come! come to my home in the north,
  With pleasures thou canst not perceive."

But the maiden called, and called loudly,
On Zeus, the all-father, to save,
And vainly mild Zephyrus struggled,
Little help to the maiden he gave.

Boreas, angered and wrathful
That his love was returned but with fright,
Seized on the imploring damsel
And bore her away out of sight.

Ever more where Favanius wanders
He sighs and he sobs as he goes;
Ever more from the north come the wailings
And moanings of griefs and of woes.

L. W. H.—1896.

TRIUMPH OF ARMINIUS.

Hurrah! the Roman corpses
  Lie in the forest far.
Hurrah! for Varus mounts no more
  In a triumphal car.

Hurrah! the Romans tried to yoke
  Two lions to the plough;
The lions broke their puny bounds
  Where are the Romans now?

Hurrah! for brave Arminius!
  Who led us to the fight.
The Suevians and Cheruskians
  For freedom just and right.

Hurrah! the news was brought to Rome
  The Imperator saw
And heard the fatal message
  That Varus was no more.

Then Octavius Augustus
  Against the unmoved wall
Smote his head thrice and cried aloud
  In anguish through the hall:
"Varus! Varus! give me
  back my legions Varus."

L. W.H.—1894.

TRANSLATION FROM QUINTIUS HORATIUS FLACCUS.

Odes—Book III.

Septimius to Gades let us roam
  Or yet Cantabria untaught to bear
  Our yoke, or yet the savage Syrtes where
Thunders the Moorish foam.

May Tibur, revered by Argive pilgrims, be
  The final couch of my declining age,
  The end of weariness, the closing page
Of travel, war and sea.

From whence, if an unkindly Fate restrains,
  We'll seek the valley of Galesus rich
  In fleecy flocks and fertile fields o'er which
Spartan Phalanthus reigns.

That corner of the earth smiles more serene
  That all the rest to me, whose honey passes
  That of Hymettus, and whose grape outclasses
That of Venafrius green;

Whose genial clime to lengthy Spring inclines
  And winters mild; where Aulon rests at peace
  With fruitful Bacchus and his quarrels cease
With the Falernian vines.

That spot and all those pleasant meads and meres
  Are calling thee and me; there shall you blend
  The glowing ashes of your poet friend
With well earned tears.

L. W. H.—June, 1902.

ON A GREEK CONDITION.

How hard is the lot of a captive taken in war
Bound by chains to the rail of the triumph car—
Choked with dust, dragged on with a jolt and a jar.
I, too, am bound to a car by the brazen chains
While Latin and Greek—grim drivers—fling out the reins,
And the car its pitiless, purposeless pace maintains.

To the left and right the river of knowledge gleams
Limpid and bright, fed by a thousand streams
That flow from the hill of thought and the vale of dreams.

The deeds of the past in a turbulent torrent race;
The river of science flows on at an even pace;
The golden ripples of fancy and fiction chase.

"Drink! oh drink!" cries the soul, "ere the bank recedes".
"Drink!" cries the heart, "oh drink!" and the body bleeds—
The skeleton drivers lean over and lash their steeds;
Ever on, ever on the classical car proceeds.

L. W. H.—February 1902.

DEAR MAMMA—

'Tis bright and cold and clear to-day,
The sunbeams glisten on the snow
Like happy thoughts that dance and play
Upon the joyful heart and throw
  Greetings to all, but most to thee,
  This day of thy nativity.

For Winter on the threshold stands
And seems to linger with a smile;
And Spring with Winter joins hands
And bids him bide a little while.
  Our thoughts like carrier pigeons roam
  Homewards—how bright to-day is home.

But nature is not always fair;
The clouds descend, the showers come,
The dull monotony of care,
The daily toils that chill and numb
  The senses and the spirit bind
  To put a polish on the mind.

To struggle on through cold and gloom,
To struggle oft without success,
And if success come—shared with whom?
How like an endless wilderness!
  And yet amid the burning sand
  Does Home her genial arms extend.

When Danger like a brazen bell
Breaks out upon the chimes of peace
The pulses beat, the spirits swell
And scatter comforts, health and ease;
  Or risking name, instead of life,
  Mix in the great financial strife

Where mighty minds meet thought with thought,
And all depends on nerve and brain,
And every energy is taut;
Nature rebels against the strain;
  Like vessels on the sea, distressed,
  Men homeward turn again for rest.

Come gain, come loss, come good, come ill,
One ever follows close the other;
But Home, unchanged, awaits me still,
And you await me still, my Mother;
And unto you all blessings be
This day of thy nativity.

By L. W. H.
March 7th, 1902.

LEAVING THE BAR.

Translation from Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Evening or matinee star—
And a Scotch highball for me
And may there be good singing at the bar
  And a game of two or three.

And when the drink puts most of us to sleep—
Too full for sound or foam,
Then out upon the reeling, rolling deep—
  I turn again home.

Lamplight and midnight bell;
And after that the dark—
I tell the blooming cops to go to hell
  At Central Park.

And though from out my bourne of time and place
My boose may bear me far—
I still must meet my good wife face to face—
When I have left the bar.

L. W. H.
Lawrenceville, 1900.

COURTING.

Not in the moonlight shall we love
  Where treacherous shadows play,
But rather the glorious sun above
  In the generous light of day
Where breezes of early morning move
  Tossing thy locks astray.

Not in the dance; the sensuous waltz
  Where subtle emotions blow
Breathing an incense utterly false;
  But down where the daisies grow
To gallop together o'er hills and walls
  And thy delicate cheeks aglow.

Not mid the strains of the sad guitar
  Or tinkling mandolin;
But while the organ resounds afar
  To gaze on thy lifted chin
And drink as the planet from the star
  The warmth of thy soul within.

Not with passionate words would I show
  The strength of my love for thee;
For speech is feeble and words are slow
  But the wings of the soul are free;
And just by a press of the hand—to know,
  And a glance of the eyes—to see.

L. W. H.—1904.

A PICTURE.

A solemn silence broods o'er the bay
  As we skim along
And slowly die the sounds of the day
  Save only the breakers moaning away
Their ceaseless song.

I can see here stretched with a careless grace
  In the bow at ease,
All wrapped in thought with an upturned face
  To the evening breeze—
A profile the dying sunbeams trace
  On the cold grey sky where the bright clouds race
Like a golden fleece.

The fitful breezes are blowing her hair
  In a shower of gold,
So thoughtful, silent, so cold, so fair
  Like a Valkyre of old,
She drinks deep draughts of the cool salt air
  The spray flies up but she does not care,
For only God and the sea are there,
  God and the sea are everywhere,
Her heart is wrapped in unconscious prayer
  And the thoughts untold.

"Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute, inglorious Milton, here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood."

GRAY'S ELEGY.

CONTRA ELEGIAM.

No genius ever dragged a silent life,
Inglorious from the cradle to the grave,
Apart from manly thought and manly strife,
Unmindful of the glory he should crave.

No Cromwell, when he heard the stirring din
That marks the raging conflict far away,
Would crush the ardor of his heart within
And live secluded from the worldly fray.

No Milton, in a quiet rustic town,
  Would dwell secluded as the ages roll,
And heedless of Ambition's call, would drown
  The noblest inspirations of his soul.

Oft from the humblest, lowliest ranks of men
  Some of the noblest heroes upward press,
And reach the summit after toil and pain,
  Where Glory waits to herald their success.

L. W. H.—1897.

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